

VZCZCXYZ0004
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUJA #2579/01 3481338
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 141338Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1666
INFO RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 8424
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS ABUJA 002579

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/AA, AF/W
DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PINR PHUM KDEM NI

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NORTHERN POLITICAL TIDBITS FOR NOV/DEC
2007

REF: A. ABUJA 2201

1B. ABUJA 1626
1C. ABUJA 1535

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11. (U) This cable is a roundup of recent political
developments across northern Nigeria, including:

-- Violence erupts in Bauchi
-- Niger governor probes former governor Kure
-- Kano Imam escapes assassination
-- LGC elections spark political violence in Kano

12. (SBU) VIOLENCE ERUPTS IN BAUCHI: On December 11, violence
erupted in Yelwa in north-eastern Bauchi state following the
demolition of a mosque, allegedly by individuals affronted by
the mosque's construction at a government secondary school.
In retaliation, Muslim youths reportedly destroyed churches,
including the Pentecostal Redeemed Christian Church of God,
and properties of Christian residents. Several persons were
injured or killed and mosques were razed in the process.
Bauchi governor Isa Yuguda claimed the violence was
politically motivated. Military were deployed to calm
tensions and a curfew was imposed in the area. (Comment:
While significant Christian minorities have long resided
relatively peacefully in the predominantly-Muslim North,
inter-religious violence has spiked several times over the
past decade. Religion is often a catalyst for hostility,
used by politicians and others to foment discord. End
Comment.)

13. (U) NIGER GOVERNOR PROBES HIS PREDECESSOR: On December 10,
Nigerian dailies reported former Niger state governor
Abdulkadir Kure (of the People's Democratic Party, PDP) is
facing investigation by Niger state authorities over his
administration's management of state resources during his
1999-2007 tenure as governor. (Note: In September 2006,
Kure's name appeared on the Economic and Financial Crimes
Commission (EFCC) list of 31 governors under investigation
for alleged corrupt practices, but he is not currently under
investigation by the EFCC. End Note.)

14. (SBU) KANO IMAM ESCAPES ASSASSINATION: On December 2,
Daily Trust newspaper reported that Ustaz Muhammad Abba, the

chief imam of a newly-built Kano mosque, narrowly escaped assassination when armed men entered the mosque during sunset prayers. One man was apprehended while fleeing the incident. (Comment: In April and July, two prominent Islamic scholars were killed by members of rival Muslim sects. This episode, however, was linked to disgruntled members of Abba's own mosque community, who sought to lead the congregation in place of Abba. Amidst a declining economy, and few employment opportunities for imams other than to lead congregations, competition to lead congregations, and consequently benefit from patronage, can be intense. As well, a significant platform of ideological influence for imams remains the mosque pulpit. End Comment.)

15. (SBU) LGC ELECTIONS SPARK POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN KANO:
Violence marred the November 17 Local Government Council (LGC) elections across 15 of Kano state's 44 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The Kano chapter of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) alleged that the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), ruling party in the state, hired "thugs" to steal ballot boxes, intimidate voters, and "cause confusion" at polling stations. Six individuals were reportedly killed in the violence. Elections in 5 LGAs, including Bichi LGA (the home of PDP gubernatorial aspirant, now Minister of State for Commerce Ahmed Bichi) were canceled due to the violence. The Kano State Independent Electoral Commission announced the ANPP won 36 LGAs and the PDP won 3; official election results announced over state-controlled media differed from the results announced by private radio stations. (Note: The Constitution empowers state governments to conduct LGC elections and establish State Independent Electoral Commissions, which conduct elections. Seats on the LGCs, to which states disburse funds for education, health, and water services, are highly sought after as rewards for party loyalists and campaign supporters. End Note.)

SANDERS